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C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 000748

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PREL MOPS EAID NL GG
SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/GEORGIA: EU DEMARCHE TO NICARAGUA

REF: A. SECSTATE 96677
 IB. THE HAGUE 728
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Classified By: Political Deputy Eric Falls

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: The Dutch expect the EU demarche to Latin American governments to express opposition to recognizing Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and the Dutch are considering withholding aid to Nicaragua based on that country's Georgia policy and restrictions on domestic political parties.

¶2. (C) Dutch MFA Deputy Head of Central American Affairs, Laetitia van Asch-Pieters, told poloff on September 11 that she expected no opposition to a proposal by Denmark for the EU to protest Nicaragua's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, with Latvia supporting a demarche to all Latin America. She said that Development Minister Koenders was "not happy" with Nicaragua's decision, and MFA Political Director De Gooijer is also upset.

¶3. (C) Development Minister Koenders is withholding approval of 12.5 million euros in 2008 budget support to the GON. He has not made a final decision because he does not want the Netherlands "to be the only one" holding back aid. According to Van Asch-Pieters, the EU Commission and Finland (which provide about 10 million euros in budget support) are also considering their aid policy but have not made a decision. The Netherlands provides a total of 25 million euros in aid to Nicaragua, and the Nicaraguans always raise the funding issue in meetings with the Dutch. In a meeting with FM Santos on August 31, Koenders expressed concern about the exclusion of two political parties from local elections in Nicaragua this year. (Note: FM Santos added that relations with the United States were better than with the EU, due to an agreement with the Americans not to engage in "megaphone" diplomacy, but rather address issues behind closed doors.
End Note.)

Culbertson